

Message Text

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USINT DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2185

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, LE

SUBJECT: ISRAELI RETALIATION

1. DURING COURSE OF MY CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN EBAN TODAY HE BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF ISRAEL'S RETALIATION RAID INTO LEBANON. EBAN STATED THAT IDF UNDER STRICT ORDERS TO AVOID ANY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. FACT THAT RAIDS MET NO OPPOSITION AT ALL IS SEEN BY EBAN AS EVIDENCE THAT LEBANESE CIVILIANS NOT ANXIOUS TO EMBRACE FEDAYEEN CAUSE. HE SAID ISRAEL IS UNABLE TO DISPROVE LEBANESE CLAIM OF TWO CIVILIAN DEATHS, ASSUMING, IF TRUE, THAT VICTIOMS FAILED TO HEAR EVACUATION ORDERS. HE ADDED THAT, EVEN IF TRUE, TWO INADVERTENT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES COULD NOT BE COMPARED WITH KIRYAT SHMONA TRAGEDY.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT DAYAN'S WIDELY REPORTED STATEMENT THAT RAIDS WERE BEGINNING OF NEW POLICY DESIGNED TO FORCE BEIRUT TO PUT AN END TO FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS FROM LEBANON, EBAN SAID THAT THE CABINET HAD NOT APPROVED ANY NEW POLICY BUT HAD ONLY APPROVED THESE SPECIFIC RAIDS.

3. EBAN THEN DISCUSSED WHAT ISRAELI POLICY WAS, WITH ITS KEY FEATURE BEING RECIPROCITY. AS HE PUT IT, IF THERE IS NO PEACE IN KIRYAT SHMONA, THEN THERE WILL BE NO PEACE IN SOUTH LEBANON.

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HE FOUND IT " CURIOUS" THAT LEBANON, WHICH HAS LESS QUARREL WITH

ISRAEL THAN ANY OTHER CONFORNTATION STATE, SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME, PERMIT THE FEDAYEEN TO LAUNCH ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY. HE CLAIMED FOOTPRINTS AT BORDER AND SUBSEQUENT TRACKING PROVE UNMISTAKEABLY THAT KIRYAT SHMONA ATTACKERS INFILTRATED FROM LEBANON.

4. ISRAEL'S REAL HOPE IS THAT SOUTH LEBANESE CIVILIANS WILL FORCE BEIRUT TO CONTROL, OR ARREST, THE FEDAYEEN. HE DREW PARALLEL WITH (PRE-SPETEMBER 1970) EAST BANK OF JORDAN WHERE CIVILIANS EVACUATED THEIR HOMES WHEN UNCONTROLLED FEDAYEEN PRESENCE BECAME INSUFFERABLE TO THEM, AS RESULT OF ISRAELI RETAILIATIONS. HE RATHER WISTFULLY ADDED THAT NOW THAT ALL IS QUIET IN THE JORDAN VALLEY, ISRAEL WOULD WELCOME THE RETURN OF THE PEOPLE TO THEIR HOMES ON THE EAST BANK.

5. WHEN SUBJECT OF REPORTED 11 LEBANESE PRISONERS CAME UP, EBAN NOTED THAT NOW ISRAEL HOLDS SEVERAL LEBANESE AND THE LEBANESE HOLD TWO ISRAELI PILOTS. HE ADDED THAT ISRAELI-LEBANESE EXCHANGES GENERALLY MOVER PRETTY QUICKLY.

6. FINAL POINT EBAN RAISED ON THIS SUBJECT WAS THAT HE FEARS MANY ISRAELIS WILL VIEW LAST NIGHT'S RAIDS AS INADEQUATE RETALIATION FOR KIRYAT SHMONA. HE NOTED THAT MANY IN ISRAEL AND APPARENTLY THE GOL EXPECTED A MUCH STRONGER IDF REACTION. HE ADDED THAT ISRAEL TOOK WHAT IT CONSIDERED MINIMAL RETALIATORY ACTION, GIVEN THE BRUTAL PROVOCATION.

6. COMMENT. EBAN CONFIRMED WHAT WE SUSPECTED UPON LEARNING THAT THE IDF RETURNED WITH SOME PRISONERS: THE ISRAELIS NOW BELIEVE THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO BARGAIN WITH GOL FOR THE RETURN OF THE PILOTS.
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